

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 6, 7 are pending in this application, and claims 6 and 7 are withdrawn. By this Amendment, claims 1-3 are amended. Support for the amendments to claim 1 may be found at least in Figure 1 and paragraphs [0019], [0025], [0033] and [0055] of the specification. No new matter is added by the above Amendment. In view of at least the following, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

I. Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102

The Office action rejects claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over EP Patent No. 0 952 046 (EP '046). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 recites, in part, "a load transmitting plate that is made of resinous material or metal, has predetermined rigidity, is disposed at vehicle body outer side surfaces of the plurality of load detection sensors, and is configured so as to be displaceable towards the vehicle body rear side with respect to a front wall portion of the bumper reinforcement" and "a bumper absorbing member provided between the load transmitting plate and the bumper cover."

Applicants respectfully submit that the applied art reference does not disclose at least the above-recited features of independent claim 1. Specifically, EP '046 discloses a vehicle bumper, as shown in Figure 1, that includes a rigid beam 2, a cover 8, and a pressure sensitive matrix 4 and a foam module 6 that are both sandwiched between the beam 2 and cover 8 (paragraph [0019]). EP '046 further discloses that the foam module 6 is provided with a plurality of vertically and horizontally spaced apart loading features 10 that are formed as projections corresponding to a region where a pressure reading will be taken (paragraph [0020]). Moreover, EP '046 discloses that the pressure sensitive matrix 4 sends pressure information for each loading feature 10 of the foam module 6 to a signal processor 14 (paragraph [0021]).

Additionally, in EP'046 no suggestion can be found that the load transmitting plate is displaceable towards the bumper reinforcement. Specifically, in EP'046, loading features 10 are provided at the foam module 6 to transmit load to the matrix 4. As such, the foam module 6 does not need to be displaced toward the rigid beam 2.

Therefore, EP '046 at least does not disclose, as recited in claim 1, a load transmitting plate disposed at vehicle body outer side surfaces of the plurality of load detection sensors that is configured to be displaceable towards the vehicle body rear side with respect to a front wall portion of the bumper reinforcement, and a bumper absorbing member provided between the load transmitting plate and the bumper cover.

The applied art reference does not disclose each and every element recited in claim 1, for at least the reasons discussed above. Therefore, the applied art reference fails to anticipate independent claim 1, and the claims dependent therefrom.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

II. Rejoinder

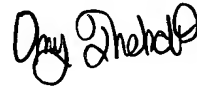
Upon allowance of apparatus claim 1, rejoinder of withdrawn method claims 6 and 7 is respectfully requested. See MPEP §821.04. Specifically, claims 6 and 7 variously depend from claim 1. Therefore, claims 6 and 7 are allowable at least for the reasons that claim 1 is allowable, as well as for the additional features they recite.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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